Are the unborn human?

by Jason Braaten

It's easy to talk about your pro-life convictions among other Christians. We share a common source of authority—the Bible. But what happens when you talk to friends or teachers who aren't Christian, who don't see the Bible as a source of authority at all? In other words, how do we contend for life in a pro-choice world? Scott Klusendorf, in his book *The Case for Life*, gives us a great three-step process.

Clarify the issue. The heart of the abortion debate is often overlooked: Are the unborn human? Are the unborn full-fledged, living members of the human race who are just at the earliest stage of development? Or are they just blobs of cells? If the unborn aren't human, no justification for abortion is necessary. If the unborn are human, no justification for abortion is adequate.

Build a case for life. We meet pro-choice advocates on common ground, using a common source of authority: science. Here biology, specifically embryology (the study of embryos), are our friends. First, the Law of Biogenesis states that (1) life only comes from life, and (2) kinds produce like kinds. In other words, a human being outside of the womb must come from a living human being inside the womb. It doesn't magically turn into a living human being at the point of birth. Human beings reproduce human beings.

Second, those who study embryos have made it crystal clear: "The beginning of a single human life is from a biological point of view a simple and straightforward matter—the beginning is conception." Science has spoken. The unborn are fully human beings. The only thing that separates the unborn from the born are their size, how developed they are, their environment (inside or outside the womb) and how dependent they are. But these differences hardly make a case for the right to take a human life, even those who are not yet born.

Answer objections: After building a case on science, we answer any objections that our friends and teachers might have. Don't be dismissive, but take them seriously. We are to give the same respect to them that we expect them to give to us. And answer honestly. If you don't know an answer, say so, and promise that you'll look into it. Your goal is not to convince them right there. It would be great if they did, but that's not likely. Make your goal instead to challenge them just enough to get them to rethink their current position, especially this question: What are the unborn?

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